

that is, two uneven numbers *must* form up into an even number, and that that number must be twelve; because one taken off seven and put on to five makes two sixes.

The abacus *leads* a child to count, that is, to add by "ones." The beads are all in rows, and who can say which is eight or nine of o o o o o o o o o, and which is odd or even, except by colour, and colour is not arithmetic. I once saw a clever inspector so arrange a large abacus, that three rows of it made a *five form*, covering the other beads with a book—the most encouraging sight I ever saw for the future of infant schools; but the children had learnt their beads in *rows*, and could not understand him. He never even mentioned counters, however, and I don't suppose "My Lords" have ever heard of them.*

Dominoes belong to us mothers at present, and if we make the best we can of them I think we may so pave the way for the teachers into whose hands our children shall fall that they will bless us. We do not always earn their benedictions at present.

We have time to *play*, that is the beauty of our work. We need not hurry; if only we will begin early enough, and be content to go slowly, and leave our "results" for others to reap in "payments," if they can.

Our reward is enough for us if the little ones continue to look on learning as a delight and a joy, and drudgery and dulness are yet unknown.

M. L. HART DAVIS.



* "My Lords" and the inspectors have doubtless heard of buttons and beans, pencils and peas, for such uses, and are familiar with the idea of teaching children to work with concrete quantities before they are introduced to abstract numbers—so would they learnedly express it.

Journalism as a Career.

By JOHN DAWSON, *Author of "Practical Journalism," &c.*

We have progressed in many ways if not in all. We may not build so well as our ancestors, but we produce better newspapers, and the position of the producer—the journalist—has improved. Nothing, perhaps, has made such rapid advances during the last quarter of a century as journalism.

Parents, now, I fancy, have ceased, generally speaking, to hold up their hands in horror should a promising son declare his intention of adopting literary work as a profession. This was not always so. In our grandfathers' days it was very often considered that to become a writer was only one remove from becoming an inmate of the workhouse. Even so recently as my youth every one had not got rid of the idea (a relic of the Grub Street period) that writing for the Press gave you only a crust one day and nothing next. I vividly remember with what alarm my mother received the intimation (delivered with great enthusiasm on my part, of course) that I meant to be a journalist. She was more disturbed than when I said I was going to be a circus clown, and it indeed lowered her spirits more than when I declared I should be a sailor, which she considered dangerous but at least respectable. My mother (bless her memory!) had known only one journalist in the little country town where we resided, and him, unfortunate wretch, she had seen horsewhipped by a stalwart draper in the High Street for something he had written. Probably she pictured her son John undergoing sundry horsewhippings at the hands of infuriated shopkeepers who object—and very properly—to the liberty of the Press being abused. I have never been horsewhipped (perchance the pleasure is yet to come)—people have chosen rather to put me in prison for my writings—but I once

came perilously near being thrashed with an umbrella wielded by the neatly-gloved hand of a pretty actress. In the faithful discharge of my duties as a dramatic critic I had written something about her acting (something of which she did not approve evidently), and she came to the newspaper office after me. Fortunately—most fortunately I have often thought since—I was not in, and she would have had some trouble to find me, for I had gone up in a balloon reporting that day, and next day I was down a coal mine, and, daintily clad as she was, she could scarcely have followed me into such regions. However, I politely answered the angry—not to say somewhat unreasonable—letter which she left for me, and we became excellent friends afterwards, almost falling in love with one another. If things in real life only ended as they usually do in novels, no doubt we should finally have married and lived happily ever afterwards. But things don't. She married the gasman at the theatre.

Ah, me! I have had some adventures, both pleasant and painful, in my career as a journalist. There is at least one thing about journalism; whatever else it may be, it is not a monotonous pursuit. But it is not play, bear in mind. Let no young man deceive himself on that score. Journalism is without question an exhausting occupation, and no one should adopt it who is not both mentally and physically fitted for it. I say physically because the work requires as much a strong constitution as it does a strong brain. Uncertain hours of labour—hard labour (no need to go to prison for that)—and consequently uncertain meal times, are prominent features in nearly every branch of journalism. It is rarely, indeed, that the newspaper man can name the exact time when he will be at home for dinner, and many a day has he gone altogether without food, having no leisure in which to eat it. Journalism, as I have already said, has its fascinations; but the work is very hard, and harder still to those who are not, both mentally and physically fitted for the calling.

To the public, less is known of what may be termed the inside of journalism than of the inner life of any other profession. The reason of this is—we are not brought into personal contact with the journalist as we are with the clergyman, the doctor, the lawyer. We see only the newspapers, and not the men who make them. Often the newspaper man is not even known to his next door neighbour, for he

screws up no brass plate on his front garden fence as does the man of law or medicine. In the breast of the literary aspirant, I know (for I was a literary aspirant once) that it excites envy to see the dramatic critic at the play, clad in spotless evening dress (ink marks do not show on a black coat in the gaslight), and apparently keenly enjoying the performance as he quickly jots down now and again a few hieroglyphics on the margin of his programme. But it is after the play, my dear young friend, when you are at home and snugly tucked up in bed, that the real work of the theatrical critic begins. You must follow him from the theatre to his newspaper office if you would behold him in the throes of composition, scribbling away for dear life, with a dirty-faced boy (usually yclept a "printer's devil") at his elbow, and a look of sadness in his eyes, for he is wondering whether the critique which he is writing (he finds he cannot conscientiously award unreserved praise to the play) will lose his employers the advertisements of that particular theatre. Newspapers are carried on with other objects than that of permitting us to air our opinions, as the journalistic novice invariably finds out, sooner rather than later. "We don't want your views," said an editor to a young leader-writer one day; "we want you to write your article in accordance with the policy of this paper." Every journalist of experience knows how essential it is that every paper should have a settled and well-defined policy, hence, is perfectly aware that the talk about signed leading articles in newspapers, except in very special cases, is ridiculous. An editor must stick to his programme, as a shoemaker to his last; and if Jones writes the leading article one day, and Smith the next, and Brown the day after that again, the opinions expressed in the several writings must all be in accordance with the declared policy of the journal; otherwise, woe to the venture. With all due respect to Mr. Sala's opinion, I hold that there is a wide difference between authorship and journalism. The author in his work gives expression to his own ideas; the journalist is engaged to write according to the views of his employers, and a happy man he is if those views chance to coincide with his own.

Journalism has for some time ceased to be a profession to which only the failures in other callings betake themselves. Youths and young men leaving, respectively, school and college,

now enter upon it, and enter upon it too, with the prospect, and a certainty also I may add, of more than the proverbial crust. Perhaps there never was greater nonsense talked about any other profession than about that of literature. To hear some people (who by the way know little or nothing of their subject), one would think that every writer below the rank of a world-known author, was on the verge of bankruptcy, and only putting off going into the workhouse till to-morrow. Of course there are impecunious writers, so are there impecunious doctors, impecunious lawyers, impecunious clergymen. I am by no means at the top of the journalistic tree, but I can say without boasting, that I have earned more by my pen in one month, than many a poor curate, barrister, or surgeon, receives in a whole year. Here is the plain truth: newspapers have become a necessity of our existence, and in order to produce these newspapers, writers must be employed, and, being employed, these writers must be paid. With the present competition among journals, editors are anxious to secure the best contributions, hence the scale of literary remuneration instead of going down, owing to the multiplicity of papers, is ever going up. During my twenty years' experience of literary work, the £ s. d. of writing has more than doubled with regard to daily and weekly papers, if not as regards monthly magazines. Just to illustrate. Take an unambitious little journal like *Tit-Bits* by way of example. It pays a guinea a column—a column which contains only about seven hundred words. Now I call this handsome pay—such pay as twenty years ago was rarely, if ever heard of. The other day I scribbled for *Tit-Bits*, an article entitled, "Confessions of a Publisher's Reader." For it Mr. George Newnes, the proprietor, sent me £2 9s., which was at the rate of a guinea a column. By the next post he forwarded me an extra guinea, which it appears it is his custom to pay when the title of an article is used for the contents bill, as was mine. This made £3 10s. for an article which contained only about as many words as would fill a column, leader type, of a daily newspaper, and which did not occupy me more than two hours to write.

Whilst on the subject of literary remuneration, I may mention that I have been paid at the rate of two shillings an inch, which is about 2¾d. a line, for notes for the *Weekly Dispatch*, that I have received 3d. a line for gossip for *Truth*, and £4 for an article for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The Editor of the *Times* is

reported to receive £5000 a-year, with free chambers in Serjeants' Inn. This is the big plum in journalism. But we must not be covetous. We cannot all be the Editor of the *Times*.

As youths and young men now leave school or college to go on the Press, it may be as well to inquire what is the best education to fit one for journalism. The question is not exactly an easy one to answer. No matter what you learn, it is sure at some time or other to be found useful in "writing for the papers." I do not think that any particular school or college course can be recommended, except generally to say that classical studies are likely to turn out of more service than mathematical. Learn your own language thoroughly, study political economy, not only from books but from an older friend who knows what he is talking about; dip as deeply as you can into history, not history written by English pens only, but history also as written by Frenchmen and Germans and Americans. Languages? Yes. Study as many modern tongues as you can. They are useful, but not essential unless you wish to represent a journal abroad. As to the advantages of a university training (I have often been asked the question), I can only say that most of the best workers I have known on the Press have not been university men. In journalism, knowledge of the world is as important as—if not more important than—educational attainments, and the man who possesses this knowledge will often make a paper, whilst the mere scholar would kill it. The journalist must feel the pulse of the public, and be able to judge thereby what to give his readers.

The journalistic aspirant having finished his school or college career, the next question arises, how shall he begin. I have no wish to unduly obtrude my own personality in this article, but I feel sure that I can best answer the question by saying how I began. My beginning was small enough and unambitious enough in all conscience. Having written a few "Letters to the Editor," which were not all inserted, and a few news paragraphs which were inserted, having also studied Pitman's shorthand for a year or two, I answered an advertisement that appeared in a Manchester daily journal, and in this way procured an engagement as junior reporter on a weekly paper in a large market town in Cheshire, at the munificent salary of 25s. a week (probably a great deal more than I was worth at the time). I have been appointed editor of more than one important journal

since then, but I have never experienced so much delight as I did when I obtained this my first post in journalism. I only remember one literary joy which was sweeter, and that was when I received the proof of the first sketch which I had had accepted by the editor of a monthly magazine. This feeling has always made me keenly appreciative of the joy which Charles Dickens tells us he felt when he received the proof of *his* first contribution (or was it the number of the journal containing the contribution?) and walked into Westminster Hall because he could not bear the glare of the light of day.

When I got to work on the Cheshire paper I found that my great drawback was my shorthand. I had a thorough theoretical knowledge of the art, but in practice I was deficient. I had practised with a clergyman in my native town, and to the fact that he delivered his sermons very slowly I now attribute much of my trouble on the Cheshire paper. I had, however, some idea of reporting (which, I may remark by the way, is a very different thing from shorthand writing); and I therefore managed to pull through very often where otherwise I should have failed. My memory, too, was good, and served me many a useful turn. If I could not always read my shorthand notes I could usually remember what the speaker had said, consequently I was able to give an accurate account of the proceedings at a meeting, though I was nowhere had I been called on to give a *verbatim* record of a speech. I may say, however, that what I lacked in shorthand I believe I made up in other ways, namely, in descriptive writing and book and magazine reviewing—that is, as well as these could be done by a youth of nineteen. The magazines and books I had to review without reading them, for there was no time for reading, and as I could in consequence only write praise I found the work very easy.

"Paragraph-hunting," as it was termed, was my chief duty as junior reporter on the Cheshire paper, and this work I rather liked. It consisted in scouring the villages round the town, and picking up every possible item of news. In doing this I had occasion to call on the parson, the schoolmaster, the policeman, and often on the shoemaker or the tailor of the village. By such means I gathered my information, which I subsequently wrote out in the shape of news paragraphs. A concert had, perchance, been held two evenings ago in the school-room. The schoolmaster supplied me with the names of those who had

kindly given their services, and informed me how they had acquitted themselves. As a rule every performer was mentioned favourably, as is the custom in journalism carried on in small country towns. From the clergyman I obtained a few notes concerning the decoration of the church for the coming harvest festival; from the policeman I heard that a burglary had been committed, and that a desperate local character had been arrested in connection therewith; and from the tailor I obtained perchance a spicy item of village gossip. Fairly worn out, I have often returned home late at night with my budget of news, which, however, I was not always obliged to write out at once, but could put off the task till the following day.

I am somewhat afraid to say more about myself, in case you dub me egotistical. I will, nevertheless, in a few additional lines, risk your opinion.

My next engagement was as sub-editor and chief reporter on a bi-weekly journal in Lancashire, at a salary of £3 10s. od. a week. Here I did not remain long, for I was dying to get to London, like many another poor ambitious young man both before and since my Provincial days. I answered an advertisement in the *Athenæum*, and, procuring the appointment, came to London, where I struggled along for about eighteen months on earnings averaging less than thirty shillings a week. Then I succeeded in obtaining an assistant sub-editorship on a London daily paper with a salary of £5 a week, in addition to which I wrote for one or two weekly papers, and also for one or two monthly magazines.

Such, briefly, were a few of my early struggles as a young journalist. I only record them here to show others who are ambitious as I was what they may expect in adopting journalism as a career. There are journalists, I know, who could tell of much more desperate struggles, and others again who could claim that they have been much more successful than I have been or ever shall be.

The young journalist is not long in London before he finds out that however useful the so-called all-round man may be in the Provinces, he is not as a rule wanted in the Metropolis. The men who succeed best on London papers are those who can do one or two things well, and as journalism progresses, "specialism," as it may be termed, will become more and more

an essential of the highest-paid workers. Take up politics, or take up social subjects, or take up sports, and study them thoroughly, so that you may be able to write knowingly on them, but do not attempt to deal with everything or anything, or you will fail. Of course, in saying this, I refer to the higher branches of journalism—editing and leader-writing. You may certainly be very successful as a journalist without aspiring to anything more than a sub-editorship, or a seat as a Parliamentary reporter in the gallery of the House of Commons.

Every journalistic aspirant should remember this: There is no royal road in the newspaper world. Ability is the only passport to an editor's favour. It should not be overlooked, too, that you must walk before you can run, and that you must serve an apprenticeship to journalism as to every other calling. You cannot, I can assure you, become a full-blown and successful working journalist without previously passing through the hard school of experience. At least I have not known a case which proved the contrary.

I should not close this article without some reference to the lady-journalist. Personally, I have always welcomed women as writers in newspapers, and can say that I have introduced a number of ladies to journalism. I have done this not on the ground of gallantry, but simply because I believe that newspapers and journals which are intended to be read by both sexes, should be written by both sexes. There is abundance of newspaper work which undoubtedly can be better done by women than by men, and this work is waiting for women to do it. Unfortunately for journalism, literary ladies mostly betake themselves to story-writing, but I can assure them that, unless they are very clever novelists indeed, there is more money to be earned by contributions to newspapers than ever they can earn by writing books. I often think that if I were a woman I could double my income by literary contributions on purely domestic matters. We have a number of clever lady-journalists whose names are familiar to the public, but there is undoubtedly room for more, and I may say that I do not think much of the poor male journalist who thinks the lady writers would enter into competition with him. My good sir, you understand the A B C of Political Economy, do you not? The prosperity of journalism is the prosperity of the journalist. What do we poor men know about fashions, and babies, and kitchen work? If

women can give us articles which will increase the sales and consequently the success of the papers, we, the men, can demand larger salaries. Some of the brightest articles I have accepted as an editor have come from women.

And now, in conclusion, let me say that journalism is a pursuit which is entitled to be considered on much higher than pecuniary grounds. A great responsibility should be felt by every true journalist. The words he pens are read by hundreds of thousands of eyes. His public is far larger than any clergyman could address from the pulpit, or any speaker could reach from the platform. It behoves the newspaper writer, therefore, to think before he writes—to pen only that which he knows is true, and not to put forth matter to feed an unhealthy taste. The power of the journalist for good or evil is enormous. To the credit of the Press, it may be said, it has, generally speaking, ever been in the van of progress, and whilst various newspapers may differ in politics, on the great questions of moral and intellectual advancement newspaper writers have been, as a body, shoulder to shoulder in the battle. Goethe's "Light, more light," might be regarded as the best possible motto that the Press, as an institution, could possibly adopt.

